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R 290911Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9132  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0869  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0124  
RHEVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000741

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [PHUM](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: GULF SHIA CONVERGE ON BAHRAIN FOR ASHURA

REF: A. MANAMA 22

[1B](#). 08 MANAMA 49

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Erel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

- 1.(SBU) Summary: Tens of thousands of Arab and Persian Shia from around the Gulf crowded into central Manama December 26-27 to commemorate Ashu
- 2.(SBU) An estimated 80,000 to 120,000 people crowded into the narrow streets of central Manama during the night of December 26-27 to mark Ashu
- 3.(SBU) Contacts agreed with Emboffs that the streets seemed even more packed than during the last few Ashuras. Emotional but organized process
- 4.(SBU) Posters lionizing Iranian or Hizballah clerics were once common at Ashura. Since 2006, when the mainstream Wifaq party agreed to partic
- 5.(SBU) Men significantly outnumbered women in the streets. The women in attendance wore black abayas and headscarves, many worn in the style c
- 6.(SBU) Although there is a consensus among mainstream Shia that the Ashura processions in downtown Manama should be kept apolitical, the radic
- 7.(SBU) In the event, Musheima seemed more restrained this year, with the notable exception of his "warning" that political naturalization migh
- 8.(C) Comment: Haq might inspire some Shia with its radical rhetoric at Ashura, but we suspect it alienates more who see it as exploiting Ashur